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ABSTRACT

The papers written by 57 high school students during the 1977 New York Regents Comprehensive Examination in English were analyzed to determine patterns of student writing maturity in comparison with research by Kellogg W. Hunt. Data were collected for t-unit length, clause length, clauses per t-unit, and t-units per sentence. A case study to discern qualitative rating features also was developed, using eight themes graded by two teachers. The results were as follows: The mean t-unit length of the top three quality groups corresponded to the length that Hunt prescribed for grade 12. The papers with the longest t-unit length were among those receiving the highest grades. Nearly one third of the papers had t-unit lengths less than the length that Hunt prescribed for grade 8, but only 23% received the lowest quality grade. Mean clause lengths were longer for the top quality groups, but more than half the papers had clause lengths below the length that Hunt designated for grade 8. No direct correlation was evident between a paper's quality grade and the ratio of clauses per t-unit. The best papers had the lowest ratio of t-units per sentence. The eight papers rated by the two teachers showed variations in quality that did not correspond to their rating order; and these papers were ranked in a different order by a third evaluator. (RL)

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# A Study to Determine the Relationship Between Indexes of Maturity and a Quality Grade in a Written Examination

Charles R. Chew

May 1978

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Author's Note.

What appears to be to one person may not be perceived in the same way by another. I take responsibility for the data in this study and the interpretation of it.

It should be understood also that the figures given in the Hunt study are not definite goals to be achieved or measured against. This has been illustrated in a number of other studies. In this study, these figures are used only as a point for comparison.

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Appendix 1

Introduction.

Kellog W. Hunt showed in his study, Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels, that there is a syntactical maturity which develops in a student's written work at various grade levels. (Hunt's explanation of the word "maturity" indicates nothing more " than the observed characteristics of writers in older grades."[1]). Hunt was able to show this development as he compared the written work of students in grades four, eight, and twelve. Through the examination of T-units in students' writing, Hunt showed a growth pattern over the grade spans; but he never implies that a specific T-unit length is a "must" at a particular grade level. In addition to the three grades, he showed a growth pattern when he compared the written work of students to a category he labeled Superior Adults.

Classroom teachers, for the most part, do not evaluate students' writings through syntax analyzation-T-unit or any other. Teachers usually use some other criteria as they affix the A's, B's... F's to the compositions written by students. If, however, as Hunt claims,[2] there has been world-wide substantiation of the finding that T-units increase in length with the age and grade of the writer, the possibility exists that the quality of a piece of writing may in some way be connected to a measure of syntactic growth or complexity. Although teachers may not grade a paper through minute analyzation of syntax, the teacher

could subconsciously sense this maturity and grade accordingly.(Odell makes the claim that there may be a strong connection between a reader's holistic judgment and the relative number of intellectual processes reflected in an essay.)[3] Could syntax also be one aspect of written work which a teacher evaluates whether she/he is aware of it or not?

Purposes of the Study.

1. To determine the maturity(Hunt's definition) of students' writing which was done for Part 111 of the June 1977 Comprehensive Examination( the New York State English Regents Examination).

2. To determine if a relationship exists between a teacher's evaluative grade(which signifies quality) and the maturity of writing as determined by the structural analysis suggested by the Hunt study.

3. To compare the maturity of writing done for the examination with Hunt's findings of syntactic maturity at three grade levels.

4. To develop a case study from the sample to ascertain what discernible features determine quality.

Background Information Related to the Sample.

Each year in June in New York state a substantial number(130,000) of high school students sit for the Comprehensive Examination in English(the Regents)*. A student can take the examination in January, June, or August; but most students elect to take the exam in June of their junior year in high school.

The examination consists of a number of different

*Hereafter referred to the Regents in this study.

parts. Vocabulary, spelling, reading comprehension, and usage are tested through objective items; however, each student must write a composition for Part 111 of the examination. Part 111 of the June 1977 examination had three parts. Students had to respond through a composition to only one of those parts, A, B, or C.

Part A read as follows, "Write a well-organized composition of 250-300 words on one of the following topics:

Freedom is a car
I belong to myself
Handbook for the 80's
Movies Hollywood never should have made
What have we done to our Heroes?
A person whose life I envy
A river is dying
It's only hair
Call of the open road
Nightmares."

Part B read as follows, "Young children are very curious about the origin of things. They ask why people have five toes, why stars twinkle at night, or how popcorn came to be popular at the movies. In 250-300 words, write a story for a preschooler in which you tell the origin of one of the things mentioned above, or of any other real or imaginary thing."

Part C read as follows, " I wonder why somebody doesn't do something. Then I realize, I am that somebody. Choose a situation in your life when you realized that you had to do something because there was

no one else who could or would respond. Write a monologue of 250-300 words in which you relate the event that aroused your response. Write the monologue as though you were talking to a friend, and state what you did or wished you had done."

Rating of the Papers.

Teachers throughout the state face the task of reading and rating these examinations at the end of the examination period. Several procedures are followed depending upon the school--individual rating to rating by committees. The person rating the paper is directed to sign it. Whatever the procedure used, each rater is guided by "Suggestions on the Rating of Regents Examination Papers in English", which lists and discusses the criteria to be considered in the rating and provides examples from which raters make inferences in regard to a quality grade(the point value to be assigned).

Rating Criteria.

It may be well to look closely at the criteria used to rate compositions for this examination. General instructions state that "No paper seriously deficient in English composition--that is, containing several serious errors in composition, such as faulty sentence structure or gross illiteracy in grammatical expression or many minor errors--will be accepted by the Department,

even though the pupil may have attained a passing mark in subject matter."[4]

These instructions are further delineated with "Judge composition answers as a whole on (1) technique of composition but require(2) competent development of the topic.

Those things which constitute technique are grammar correctness, punctuation and capitalization, paragraphing, writing, spelling--basic and ordinary words, introduction and conclusion, use of idioms, emphasis, word order, vocabulary, word coherence, modes and tenses, and spelling--unusual words.(The list is given exactly as found in the "Suggestions" pamphlet.)

If one were to order those areas of technique, three categories seem to emerge which could be headed as organization, grammar, mechanics and usage(one listing), possibly another category would be diction. Even with such a list an emphasis is not apparent unless it is on grammar et al. In addition, no direction is given to the rater relative to values to be assigned for the categories.

If one looks for an explication of topic development(none has been given up to this point), one concludes that arrangement of ideas, mature thought, individuality, and knowledge of subject constitute the ingredients of topic development.

One last criterion is established, composition length. Each composition must have at least 250 words to be considered for full credit. Teachers are

instructed to deduct credit for short compositions.

To further explain the composition grading process, examples of compositions are given in the pamphlet with a rating. The pamphlet provides a quality scale for a composition grade. Since the composition is worth 30 points, a relation is shown between point value and a percentage point value, e.g. 27-30 points for a 90-100 composition, 24-26 for an 80-90 composition, 21-23 for a 70-80 composition and so on.

Comments follow these ratings. These comments are in terms of technique and topic development but do not elaborate upon these areas to any degree beyond what has already been stated here.

Although criteria have been stated and examples given, the rater, as the Follman-Anderson research suggests, brings to the task a substantial degree of personal judgment. The examples do not have interlinear comments or specific references to show why certain comments have been made with the resultant rating. In addition, the examples given are not ones from the present or even a current examination. Because of this, the rater can only infer a criteria relationship; and the nebulous criteria may heighten this role of personal judgment.

William E. Coffman in his research suggests that the more clearly the different points on the(rating) scale can be defined, the more reliable the rating is likely to be.[5] Educational Testing Service has

demonstrated that there is high inter-rater reliability provided two conditions prevail: (1) that the raters understand the criteria for evaluating and (2) are given practice in using these criteria.

In his discussion of holistic evaluation, Charles Cooper states, "And now we come to the main constraints on achieving reliable scores of writing performance: cooperation and time. Reliabilities as high as the ones I mention... are never possible from one rating of one paper."[6]

Obviously rater reliability has not been established with this examination. This fact must remain as an unfortunate "given" in this study; however, in samples from Teacher A and Teacher B some of the heterogeneousness in academic and experiential background of which Follman and Anderson speak should be somewhat reduced. The "Rating Pamphlet," as weak as it may be, does serve to a degree as a sensitizer or organizer of the rater's perception and gives direction to his/her attitudes and values. I did, however, assume that each rater had established "criteria" in assigning the grade to the examination although research has shown that the same rater may not assign the same grade to the paper if it is rated again at another date.(See #1 under Limitations of the Study.)

<u>The Sample</u>.

Rated papers from the schools throughout the state are called into the Department for review after each

examination. The purposes vary for such reviews, but primarily there is an interest in how the questions functioned and how the students perform. From the papers called in for review, I was able to secure my sample.

Three different groups of papers were selected. Group A had been rated by one teacher. Group B had been rated by another teacher. Group C was randomly selected from all the papers which had been sent to the Department for review.

The following shows the make-up of the sample.

| Teacher A | | Teacher B | | Teacher C | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 90-100 | 5 papers | Grade 90-100 | 5 papers | Grade 90-100 | 5papers |
| 80-90 | 5 papers | 80-90 | 4 papers | 80-90 | 5papers |
| 70-80 | 5 papers | 70-80 | 5 papers | 70-80 | 5papers |
| 60-70 | 3 papers | 60-70 | 5 papers | 60-70 | 5papers |
| | 18 papers | | 19 papers | | 20papers |

## Sample: Grouped With Quality Designation

| | Teacher A | | Teacher B | | Teacher C |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A1-30 | | B2-29 | | C1-29 |
| 1A | A2-30 | 1B | B3-28 | 1C | C2-28 |
| | A3-29 | | B4-28 | | C3-28 |
| | A4-27 | | B5-27 | | C4-27 |
| | A5-27 | | B6-27 | | C5-28 |
| 2A | A6-26 | 2B | B7-25 | 2C | C6-24 |
| | A7-26 | | B8-25 | | C7-24 |
| | A8-25 | | B9-24 | | C8-24 |
| | A9-24 | | B10-24 | | C9-25 |
| | A10-24 | | | | C10-25 |
| 3A | A11-23 | 3B | B11-23 | 3C | C11-23 |
| | A12-23 | | B12-23 | | C12-23 |
| | A13-22 | | B13-22 | | C13-23 |
| | A14-21 | | B14-22 | | C14-22 |
| | A15-21 | | B15-22 | | C15-21 |
| 4A | A18-20 | 4B | B16-19 | 4C | C16-20 |
| | A19-20 | | B17-19 | | C17-17 |
| | A20-18 | | B18-18 | | C18-18 |
| | | | B19-17 | | C19-18 |
| | | | B20-20 | | C20-15 |

1A, 1B, 1C indicates the first group of Teacher A,B,C, etc.

A1,B1, C1 indicates the first paper of Teacher A,B,C, etc.

The numbers 30, 29, 29 are the quality points assigned to the paper by the teacher.

Procedures for the Study

The sample was taken from the papers called in for a general review by the Department. Each paper, when rated by the classroom teacher, must be signed by the teacher. This enabled a sample to be taken for Teacher A, Teacher B, and Teacher C. Papers were taken from each teacher to represent four different quality types, creating four distinct groups of papers for each teacher. Each paper was then analyzed for T-unit length, clause length, ratio of clauses to T-units, and ratio of T-units to sentences. Papers were analyzed for these factors by methods described in the Hunt study. An analysis of variance plus the Duncan Multiple-Range Test was used to determine significant differences among the groups in the sample. Data were compared to the findings of Hunt.

In addition a short case study was made from four papers marked by Teacher A and from Teacher B to determine how closely these teachers followed the given criteria for rating the examination and to determine discernible factors which may have guided the grade assignment.

Limitations of the Study.

1. The rigors of rater training suggested to obtain rater reliability were not possible. Reliance on the classroom English teacher as a reliable rater had to be accepted. I can only hope that the rater had been given the proper training and orientation and had a copy of "Suggestions on the Rating of Regents Examination Papers in English." Unfortunately I feel that in rating these papers, teachers are likely to accommodate their judgment to tangential or irrelevant qualities which will introduce bias into their judgment. This may be offset by the fact that when a rater thinks that she/he is judging some specific quality, it is often a response to the overall quality of the essay.

As we may have to accept a single performance of a writer as a valid one even if it is the writer's worst, since a test by definition is a decisive trial and ipso facto imposes the worst possible conditions, we may have to do the same with the rater as well.

2. Not all papers in the sample are on the same topic, but all of the responses with the exception of six are on one of the topics in Part III-A.

3. Five papers for each grade point category for Teacher A and Teacher B were not available; therefore, in the sample, Teacher A has only three papers in Group 4A; Teacher B, four papers in Group 2B.

4. The Regents is a rigidly controlled essay test

situation. The examination is secure, given at the same time to all students taking it in the state. Sanders and Littlefield describe such a situation.

> "The rigidly controlled essay test situation surely represents the ultimate in an artificial writing situation, as such, it is exactly the kind of situation shunned in many modern composition courses, while the test essay is primarily timed, in many courses the student is encouraged to think, research, write, rewrite, perhaps solicit the advice and reaction of others, and rewrite again and again. The student has no chance to go through this process in writing an impromptu test essay. In addition, the timed situation which places a premium on verbal fluency and speed of composition may particularly work to the disadvantage of the slower student who needs more time to demonstrate what he has learned.
> "Moreover, the test situation limits the student's motivation for writing well, namely a desire to communicate effectively with his readers on a subject he finds interesting...
> "Another major problem is that the kind of writing called for is generally described only in terms of a mode of discourse." 7

5. The size of the sample itself may not have been large enough to yield data to show a significant difference in the various comparisons.

## Mean T-Unit Lenghts For All Papers

| A | | B | | C | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A1 | 19.67 | B2 | 18.35 | C1 | 11.13 |
| A2 | 14.54 | B3 | 12.93 | C2 | 14.49 |
| A3 | 15.12 | B4 | 16.39 | C3 | 18.58 |
| A4 | 12.5 | B5 | 14.14 | C4 | 12.66 |
| A5 | 11.11 | B6 | 18.15 | C5 | 13.76 |
| Av. | 14.6 | | 15.99 | | 14.12 |
| A6 | 9.75 | B7 | 14.57 | C6 | 10.19 |
| A7 | 8.86 | B8 | 12.71 | C7 | 13.33 |
| A8 | 13.14 | B9 | 14.47 | C8 | 11.16 |
| A9 | 8.82 | B10 | 11.65 | C9 | 12.85 |
| A10 | 9 | | | C10 | 8.68 |
| Av. | 9.91 | | 13.35 | | 11.24 |
| A11 | 16 | B11 | 13.07 | C11 | 10.22 |
| A12 | 15.75 | B12 | 9.395 | C12 | 11.54 |
| A14 | 13.25 | B13 | 10.95 | C13 | 14.35 |
| A16 | 10.5 | B14 | 13.07 | C14 | 14.99 |
| A17 | 11.95 | B15 | 12.88 | C16 | 13.32 |
| Av. | 13.49 | | 12.87 | | 12.88 |
| A18 | 11.81 | B16 | 10.85 | C17 | 13.78 |
| A19 | 17.73 | B17 | 15.59 | C18 | 13.66 |
| A20 | 14.27 | B18 | 12.55 | C19 | 10.91 |
| | | B19 | 12.55 | C20 | 13.78 |
| | | B20 | 10.95 | C21 | 10.77 |
| Av. | 14.6 | | 11.85 | | 12.58 |

Comparison of T-Unit Lengths to Hunt's Data-Groups and Individuals

| | Superior Adults | Grade 12-S.A. | Grade 8-12 | Grade 4-8 | Below Grade 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1A, 4A, 1B | 3A, 2B, 3B, 4B, 1C, 3C, 4C | 2A, 2C | |
| | | 17% | 58% | 25% | |
| Teacher A | | A1, A2, A3, A11, A12, A19 | A4, A8, A14, A17, A18, A20 | A5, A6, A7, A9, A10, A16 | |
| | | 33.3% | 33.3% | 33.3% | |
| Teacher B | | B2, B4, B6, B7, B9, B17 | B3, B5, B8, B10, B11, B14, B15, B19 | B12, B13, B16, B18, B20 | |
| | | 32% | 42% | 26% | |
| Teacher C | | C2, C3, C14 | C4, C5, C7, C9, C12, C13, C16, C17, C18, C20 | C1, C6, C8, C10, C11, C19, C21 | |
| | | 15% | 50% | 35% | |

Hunt gives 20.3 as the mean T-unit length for Superior Adults, 14.4 for grade 12 students, 11.5 for grade eight students, and 8.6 for grade four students. Interestingly, the mean T-unit length of the Group 1 papers(top quality) of the sample were close to the mean T-unit length of Hunt's grade 12 sample(1A-14.6, 1B-15.9,1C-14.12). Only one other group--4A--had a T-unit length of 14 or better.

None of the mean T-unit length for any of the groups approach this length, and only four individual papers(A1-19.67, B2-18.35, B6-18.15, C3-18.58) have a T-unit length of 18 or more. It should be noted that these four papers are found in the top quality groups of the sample.

Of the twelve groups in the sample, three are in the range of 14.4-20.3(1A-14.6, 4A-14.6, 1B-15.99). Seven are in the range of 11.5-14.3(3A-13.49, 2B-13.35, 3B-11.87, 4B-11.85, 1C-14.12, 3C-12.88, 4C-12.58). Two groups are in the range of 8.6-11.4(2A-9.91, 2C-11.24).

A comparison of the mean T-unit length of the twelve groups of the sample shows twenty-five percent above Hunt's grade 12 length, fifty eight-percent in the range between grade 8 and grade 12, and seventeen percent in the range between grade 4 and grade 8.

An examination of the three sample separately reveals for Teacher A, 33.3 percent of the papers are above the mean T-unit length for grade 12, 33.3 percent in the range between grade 8 and grade 12, 33.3

percent in the range between grade 4 and grade 8; for Teacher B, 32 percent of the papers have a T-unit length above that for grade 12, 42 percent range between grade 8 and grade 12, 26 percent range between grade 4 and grade 8; for Teacher C, 15 percent of are above the mean T-unit length for grade 12, 50 percent range between grade 8 and grade 12, and 35 percent range between grade 4 and grade 8. None range below the grade 4 mean T-unit length.

No pattern seems to emerge in a comparison of the various groups which represent a quality grade. Certainly there is no linear differentiation to suggest that the longer T-unit corresponds to the higher quality grade, with one exception--Teacher B's papers which will be discussed later in this paper.

In Teacher A's papers, three of the groups are very close in mean T-unit length, two were the same. Groups 1A and 4A are significantly different from Group 2A at the .05 level. No discernible relationship seems to exist among the various groups of Teacher A. There is no T-unit length for each group to suggest that one could expect to find a certain T-unit length for a particular grade category, but rather there is a diversity of length.

An examination of the individual papers of the Teacher A sample reveals the following. There are six papers in the range of 14.4-20.3(A1-19.67, A2-14.54, A3-15.12, A11-16, A12-15.75, A19-17.73). Six papers

are in the range of 11.5-14.3(A4-12.5, A8-13.14 A14-13.25, A17-11.95, A18-11.81, A20-14.27). Six papers are in the range of 8.6-11.4(A5-11.11, A6-9.75, A7-8.86, A9-8.82, A10-9, A16-10.5). None is below 8.6.

In Teacher B's papers, the mean T-unit length for the four groups shows a linear differentiation, from a high of 15.99-1B to a low of 11.85-4B although the difference between 3B and 4B is quite small. A statistical analysis of the mean T-unit length for these groups reveals a significant difference at the .05 level between Groups 1B and 4B, 1B and 3B, and falls short by only .04(2.68-2.64) of a significant difference between Groups 1B and 2B.

An examination of individual T-unit lengths reveals the following. Six papers are in the range of 14.4-20.3(B2-18.35, B4-16.39, B6-18.15, B7-14.57, B9-14.47, B17-15.59). Eight papers are in the range of 11.5-14.3(B3-12.93, B5-14.14, B8-12.71, B10-11.65, B11-13.07, B14-13.07, B15-12.88, B19-12.55). Five papers are in the range of 8.6-11.4(B12-9.39, B13-10.95, B16-10.85, B18-9.33, B20-10.95). No T-unit length falls below 8.6.

In Teacher C's papers, there is no linear differentiation among the mean T-unit lengths of the four groups. Group 1C shows the longest mean T-unit length, but both Group 3C and 4C are longer than 2C. A statistical analysis of these mean T-unit lengths reveals a significant difference at the .05 level between Groups 1C and 2C only. There is no significant

difference among any of the groups.

An examination of the T-unit length of individual papers reveals the following. Three papers are in the range of 14.4-20.3(C2-14.49, C3-18.58, C14-14.99). Ten papers are in the range of 11.5-14.3(C4-12.66, C5-13.76, C7-13.33, C9-12.85, C12-11.54, C13-14.35, C16-13.32, C17-13.78, C18-13.66, C20-13.78). Seven papers are in the range of 8.6-11.4(C1-11.13, C6-10.19, C8-11.16, C10-8.68, C11-10.22, C19-10.92, C21-10.77). No paper ranges below 8.6

Discussion- T-unit.

If maturity is reflected in syntactical development, it is interesting to compare the data to that of Hunt. Twenty-five percent of the mean T-unit length of the groups reflect a maturity above that given by Hunt for grade 12. It is surprising that seventeen percent of the papers reveal a maturity which is in Hunt's range for grade 4 to grade 8.

An examination of the three samples separately with attention to individual T-unit length and the quality score as compared with Hunt's findings indicate a difference in percentages in the various ranges. The majority of the students attained a mean T-unit length above that of grade 8. The percentage in that range, however, has decreased to sixty-nine percent as opposed to the eighty-three percent revealed when papers were grouped according to a quality score. The percentage of individual papers with T-unit lengths below grade 8 has increased to thirty-one

percent.(nearly a third of the papers)

This suggests that nearly a third of the papers written for this examination and examined in this study do not reflect the maturity that Hunt found in his grade 8 sample, yet only twenty-three percent of these papers were in the lowest quality grouping.

In the papers of Teacher A, one third of the papers reflect a syntactical maturity in the range given by Hunt for grade 4 to grade 8, but only seventeen percent of these papers received the lowest quality grade. In Teacher B's sample, twenty-six percent of the papers are below the same range and twenty-six percent are in the lowest quality group. In Teacher C's sample, thirty-five percent are in the grade 4 to grade 8 range and twenty-five percent of the papers received a grade in the lowest quality group. With this comparison, only Teacher B's papers suggest the possibility of a relationship between a quality grade given and the T-unit length.

In Teacher A's papers as grouped for quality, no relationship seems to exist between the mean T-unit length of the quality grouping which would indicate that the better papers have a longer T-unit. In fact, Teacher A has given the best grades and the lowest grades to two groups which have the longest mean T-unit length. The group with the shortest T-unit length received the second highest grades. This teacher does not seem to have used syntactical maturity(T-unit) consciously or subconsciously as a criterion on which

to base a grade. The same conclusions can be drawn in a closer examination of the sample for Teacher J.

In Teacher B's papers, there is a linear differentiation among the groups as explained earlier. The highest quality group has a longer mean T-unit length which may suggest that syntactic maturity(T-unit) may have been a criterion on which quality was judged although it obviously was not one consciously employed by the teacher.

The data do not blatantly illustrate a connection between Hunt's T-unit and a quality grade. Only one of the samples illustrates the possibility of such a relationship. Yet there are some interesting factors which do emerge as one examines the data. All of the highest quality groups of papers are in the range of Hunt's grade 12 students with the exception of one group. An examination of individual papers reveals that the papers with a T-unit length closest to that given by Hunt for Superior Adults are found in the top quality groups of papers.

The evidence does not confirm or deny a relationship between the T-unit and quality. Some studies now seem to suggest that the T-unit may not be a measure to use to indicate the quality of a paper. I feel much more work has to be done before such a criterion can be completely ruled out.

## Clause Length For All Groups

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A1 | 14.05 | | B2 | 10.05 | | C1 | 9.03 |
| | A2 | 9.43 | | B3 | 7.99 | | C2 | 8.63 |
| | A3 | 8.19 | | B4 | 11.35 | | C3 | 14.52 |
| 1A | A4 | 9.78 | 1B | B5 | 7.88 | 1C | C4 | 8.14 |
| | A5 | 6.02 | | B6 | 11.34 | | C5 | 9.82 |
| Average | | 9.65 | | | 9.72 | | | 10.03 |
| | A6 | 5.895 | | B7 | 7.65 | | C6 | 6.92 |
| | A7 | 5.71 | | B8 | 9.39 | | C7 | 10 |
| | A8 | 8.28 | | B9 | 9.82 | | C8 | 6.56 |
| 2A | A9 | 6.64 | 2B | B10 | 7.47 | 2C | C9 | 7.5 |
| | A10 | 6.57 | | | | | C10 | 7.83 |
| Average | | 6.62 | | | 8.58 | | | 7.76 |
| | A11 | 11.59 | | B11 | 8.61 | | C11 | 5.98 |
| | A12 | 7.41 | | B12 | 6.03 | | C12 | 6.92 |
| | A14 | 9.64 | | B13 | 6.51 | | C13 | 8.97 |
| 3A | A16 | 5.64 | 3B | B14 | 6.64 | 3C | C14 | 8.41 |
| | A17 | 7.38 | | B15 | 8.26 | | C16 | 7.51 |
| Average | | 8.33 | | | 7.21 | | | 7.56 |
| | A18 | 7.03 | | B16 | 6.13 | | C17 | 6.89 |
| | A19 | 10.23 | | B17 | 6.79 | | C18 | 7.97 |
| 4A | A20 | 10.83 | 4B | B18 | 6.81 | 4C | C19 | 8.45 |
| | | | | B19 | 6.61 | | C20 | 8.48 |
| | | | | B20 | 9.95 | | C21 | 7.34 |
| Average | | 9.36 | | | 7.26 | | | 7.83 |

## Clause Length Comparisons to Hunt-Group and Individual

| Groups | Above 11.5 | 8.6-11.4 | 8.1-8.5 | 6.6-8 | Below 6.6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1A, 1B, 1C 4A | 2B, 3A | 2A, 2C, 3C, 3B, 4B, 4C | |
| | | 33% | 17% | 50% | |
| Teacher A | A1, A11 | A2, A4, A14, A19, A20 | A3, A8 | A5, A9, A12, A17, A18 | A6, A7, A10, A16 |
| | 11% | 28% | 11% | 28% | 22% |
| Teacher B | | B4, B8, B20, B6, B9, B2, B11 | B15 | B3, B5, B7, B10, B14, B17, B18, B19 | B12, B13, B16 |
| | | 37% | 5% | 42% | 16% |
| Teacher C | C3 | C1, C2, C5, C7, C13 | C4, C14, C19, C20 | C6, C9, C10, C12, C16, C17, C18, C21 | C8, C11 |
| | 5% | 25% | 20% | 40% | 10% |

Hunt gives as the mean clause length the following: Superior Adults-11.5, grade 12-8.6, grade 8-8.1, grade 4-6.6. A comparison of the various groups in this sample reveals that all of the top groups are above the Hunt figure for grade 12(1A-9.65, 1B-9.72, 1C-10.03). In addition, Group 4A is above that figure. Group 2B is the closest to Hunt's grade 12 length(8.58). Six groups are below the mean length given for grade 8 but above the one given for grade 4(3B-7.21, 4B-7.26, 2C-7.76, 3C-7.56, 4C-7.83, .2A-6.62). This means that two of the groups are in the range of mean length given for grade8 to grade 12(3A-8.33 and 2B already mentioned!

In the papers for Teacher A, there is no linear differentiation among the mean clause length of the groups. The longest length is recorded for the quality groups at both ends of the scale. The papers rated by this teacher as the best and the poorest both have a mean clause length which is better than nine. Group 2A has a shorter mean clause length than Group 3A.

An examination of individual papers within the sample reveals two papers with a mean clause length above that given by Hunt for Superior Adults(A1-14.05, A11-11.59). Five papers above the 8.6 which Hunt gives for grade 12 students but below that given for Superior Adults(A2-9.34, A4-9.78, A14-9.64, A19-10.23, A20-10.83). Two scores are above the mean clause length given for grade 8 but below grade 12(A3-8.19,

A8-8.28). Five clause lengths are below grade 8 but above grade 4(A5-6.82, A9-6.64, A12-7.41, A17-7.38, A18-7.03). Four papers have a clause length below that given for grade 4(A6-5.895, A7-5.71, A10-6.57, A16-5.65).

In the papers of Teacher B, there is a linear differentiation in mean clause length related to the quality grouping, 1Band 2B, 2B and 3B. Group 3B is smaller than 4B however by .05. A statistical analysis reveals a significant difference at the .05 level between Group 1B and 3B and 4B. There is no significant difference among any of the other groups.

An examination of individual papers within the Teacher B sample reveals seven papers with a clause length above the 8.6 which Hunt gives for his grade 12 (B2-10.05, B4-11.35, B6-11.34, B8-9.39, B9-9.82, B11-8.61, B20-9.95). Only one paper is above the eighth grade clause length but below that of grade 12 (15-8.22). Eight papers were found to have a clause length longer than Hunt's grade 4 but less than for grade 8(B3-7.99, B5-7.88, B7-7.65, b10-7.47, B14-6.64, B17-6.79, B18-6.81, B19-6.61). In this sample, three papers have a clause length below the one Hunt found for his grade 4(B12-6.03, B13-6.51, B16-6.13).

In the papers of Teacher C, there is a linear differentiation in the mean clause length among Groups 1C and 2C and 2C and 3C. The differentiation does not continue through the sample because the mean clause length of Group 4C is greater than that of 3C.

A statistical analysis of the difference of means of each group reveals a difference betwee Group 1C and all other groups(1C vs. 2C, 1C vs. 3C, 1C vs. 4C).which is significant at the .05 level.

An examination of individual papers within the sample reveals one paper above mean clause length of Superior Adults(C3-14.5). Five papers are above grade 12 but below the length of Hunt's Superior Adults. (C1-9.03, C2-8.63, C5-9.82, C7-10, C13-8.97). Four papers are in the range of grade 8 to grade 12 (C4-8.14, C14-8.41, C19-8.45, C20-8.48). Eight papers are above Hunt's grade 4 but below grade 8 (C6-6.92,C9-7.5, C10-7.83, C12-6.92, C16-7.51, C17-6.89, C18-7.97, C21-7.34). Two papers are below the mean clause length given for grade 4(C8-6.56, C11-5.98).

Discussion--Clause Length.

Hunt's figures suggest that clause length increases as a person gets older, at least within the parameters of his study. Would clause length be a criterion for a quality grade? With a comparison of the groups within this study, it is interesting to note that the three top quality groups of papers--1A, 1B, 1C--all range in Hunt's range of grade 12 to Superior Adults. Only one other group can be included in this grouping--4A. No group has a mean clause length above the Superior Adult range, and there is none below grade 4. One third of the papers, however, are above the grade 12 length given by Hunt; but one half are below the grade 8

level. Only twenty-three percent of the papers in this sample are in the lowest quality group, so the relationship between quality and clause length does not seem to be a direct one.

An examination of the clause lengths of papers in the sample reveals for Teacher A-fifty percent of the papers have a clause length below the clause length given for grade 8, twenty-two percent have a clause length less than grade 4, yet only seventeen percent of this sample is designated in the lowest quality grouping; for Teacher B, fifty-eight percent of thepapers have a clause length less than grade 8, sixteen percent below grade 4, yet only twenty-seven percent of the papers are in the lowest quality group; for Teacher C, fifty-three percent of the papers have a clause length less than grade 8, sixteen percent of the papers have a clause length less than grade 4, yet only twenty-five percent of the papers are in the lowest quality grouping of papers.

Even though there does not seem to be a direct relationship between the quality grade and clause length, in two of the groups indicated as the top quality papers, the mean clause length is longer than in any of the other groups. In Teacher B and C, clause length may have been a factor(apparent or not) as the teachers rated the papers, at least in the differentiation of the best papers from those of lesser quality.

## Clauses/T-Units

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A1 | 1.4 | B2 | 1.83 | C1 1.23 |
| | A2 | 1.54 | B3 | 1.62 | C2 1.68 |
| | A3 | 1.85 | B4 | 1.44 | C3 1.28 |
| | A4 | 1.28 | B5 | 1.79 | C4 1.55 |
| | A5 | 1.63 | B6 | 1.6 | C5 1.4 |
| Average | | 1.54 | | 1.66 | 1.43 |
| | A6 | 1.66 | B7 | 1.9 | C6 1.47 |
| | A7 | 1.55 | B8 | 1.35 | C7 1.33 |
| | A8 | 1.59 | B9 | 1.47 | C8 1.7 |
| | A9 | 1.33 | B10 | 1.56 | C9 1.71 |
| | A10 | 1.37 | | | C10 1.11 |
| Average | | 1.5 | | 1.57 | 1.46 |
| | A11 | 1.38 | B11 | 1.52 | C11 1.71 |
| | A12 | 2.125 | B12 | 1.56 | C12 1.67 |
| | A14 | 1.38 | B13 | 1.68 | C13 1.6 |
| | A16 | 1.86 | B14 | 1.97 | C14 1.78 |
| | A17 | 1.62 | B15 | 1.56 | C15 1.86 |
| Average | | 1.67 | | 1.66 | 1.72 |
| | A18 | 1.68 | B16 | 1.77 | C16 2 |
| | A19 | 1.73 | B17 | 2.29 | C17 1.71 |
| | A20 | 1.32 | B18 | 1.37 | C18 1.29 |
| | | | B19 | 1.9 | C19 1.63 |
| | | | B20 | 1.11 | C20 1.47 |
| Average | | 1.58 | | 1.69 | 1.62 |

Clauses/T-Units Comparisons to Hunt-Groups and Individuals

| | Below Grade 4 | Grade 4-8 | Grade 8-12 | Grade 12-SA | Above SA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Groups | | | 1A,2A,3A,4A, 1B,2B,3B,1C, 2C,4C | 4B,3C | |
| | | | 83% | 17% | |
| Teacher A | A4 | A1, A9, A10, A11, A20 | A2, A5, A6, A7, A8, A17 | A8, A19 | A3,A12 A16 |
| | 5.5% | 33.3% | 33.3% | 11.1% | 16.6% |
| Teacher B | B20 | B8, B18 | B3,B4,B6,B9, B10. B11,B12, B15 | B13,B16 | B2,B5, B7,B14, B17,B11 |
| | 5% | 10.5% | 42% | 10.5% | 32% |
| Teacher C | C1,C3,C10, C19 | C5,C7 | C4,C6,C12, C13,C20,C21 | C8,C9,C11, C18 | C16,C2 C17,C14 |
| | 20% | 10% | 30% | 20% | 20% |
| Totals | 10.5% | 17.5% | 35% | 14% | 23% |

In Hunt's discussion of the ratio of clauses to T-units, he indicates that the ratio has three uses: it provides an arithmetic bridge between clause length and t-unit length; second, it conveniently expresses the frequency with which a subordinate clause is added to a main clause; third, it serves as a significant index of one kind of grammatical development. Hunt gives the following ratios: 1.30 for grade 4, 1.42 for grade 8, 1.68 for grade 12, and 1.78 for Superior Adults.

An examination of the mean of the ratios of the Teacher A sample reveals no linear differentiation among the groups. Group 3A of this sample comes closest to the ratio given by Hunt for his grade 12. No group compares to the Superior Adults. Groups 1A, 2A, and 4A range between Hunt's ratio for grade 8 and grade 12. No group mean ratio is below that given for grade 8.

An examination of individual ratios of this teacher's sample reveals three papers above 1.78 (A3-1.85, A12-2.12, A16-1.86). Two ratios are in the range of 1.68-1.77 A8-1.68, A19-1.73). Six ratios are in the range of 1.42-1.67(A2-1.54, A5-1.63, A6-1.66, A7-1.55, A8-1.59, A17-1.62). Six ratios are in the range of 1.30-1.41(A1-1.4, A9-1.33, A10-1.37, A11-1.38, A14-1.38, A20-1.32). Only one was below 1.30(A4-1.28).

An examination of the mean of the ratios of the Teacher B sample reveals no linear differentiation among the groups. Three of the group mean ratios are within .02 of the 1.68 ratio given by Hunt for his grade 12(1B-1.66, 3B-1.66, 4B-1.69). No group is below the ratio given by Hunt for his grade 8.

An examination of the individual ratios of this sample reveals six ratios above the one given by Hunt for Superior Adults(B2-1.83, B5-1.79, B7-1.9, B14-1.97, B17-2.29, B11-1.9). Two ratios are in the range of 1.68-1.77(B13-1.68, B16-1.77). Eight ratios are in the range of 1.42-1.67(B3-1.62, B4-1.44, B6-1.6, B9-1.47, B10-1.56, B11-1.52, B12-1.56, B15-1.56). Two ratios are in the range of 1.30-1.41 (B8-1.35, B18-1.37). One ratio falls below 1.30(B20-1.1).

An examination of the group mean ratios of the Teacher C sample reveals no linear differentiation among the groups. Group 3C is in the range for grade 12 to Superior Adults. Groups 1C, 2C, and 4C are in the range between grade 8 and grade 12.

An examination of individual ratios of the sample reveals two above 1.78(C16-1.86, C17-2). Two are at the 1.78 level(C2-1.78, C14-1.78). Four are in the range of 1.68-1.77(C8-1.7, C9-1.71, C11-1.71, C18-1.71). Six ratios are in the range of 1.42-1.67(C4-1.55, C6-1.47, C12-1.67, C13-1.6, C20-1.63, C21-1.47). Two are in the range of 1.30-1.41(C5-1.4, C7-1.33). Four are below 1.30(C1-1.23, C3-1.28, C10-1.11, C19-1.29).

A comparison of the group ratios of the sample to Hunt's findings reveals that all of the groups were in the range above grade 8. Eighty-three percent of the groups were in the range between grade 8 and 12, and seventeen percent were in the range between grade 12 and Superior Adults.

An examination of individual ratios reveals in the Teacher A sample 5.5 percent of the papers are in the range below grade 4; 10.5 percent are in the range of grade 4 to grade 8; 33.3 percent are in the range of grade 8 to grade 12; 11.1 percent are in the range of grade 12 to Superior Adults; 16.6 percent are above the Superior Adults' figure.

An examination of individual ratios in the Teacher B sample reveals 5 percent of the papers are below grade 4; 10.5 percent are in the range of grade 4 to grade 8; 42 percent are in the range of grade 8 to grade 12; 10.5 percent are in the range of grade 12 to Superior Adults; 32 percent are above the Superior Adults figure.

An examination of individual ratios in the Teacher C sample reveals 20 percent of the papers are below the figure for grade 4; 10 percent are in the range of grade 4 to grade 8; 30 percent are in the range of grade 8 to grade 12; 20 percent are in the range of grade 12 to Superior Adults; 20 percent are above the figure for Superior Adults.

Thirty-nine percent of Teacher A's papers are

below the figure given in Hunt's findings for grade 8, but only seventeen percent are in the lowest quality group of papers. Fifteen percent of Teacher B's papers are below, but twenty-six percent of the papers are in the lowest quality grouping. Twenty-eight percent of Teacher C's papers are below, but only twenty-five percent are in the lowest grouping.

In each sample then, taken either as grouped or as individual papers, over 50 percent of the papers have a ratio above that which Hunt gives for grade 8; however, there does not seem to be a direct correlation between the quality scores given and the ratio of clauses to T-units.

The data simply indicates that the majority of students who wrote these papers had a clause to T-unit ratio which was above the one Hunt gave for grade 8 students; the ratio itself does not appear to be an indicator of the quality of a paper.

## T- Units/Sentences for All Papers

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A1 | 1 | | B2 | 1 | | C1 | 1.11 |
| | A2 | 1 | | B3 | 1.4 | | C2 | 1.12 |
| | A3 | 1.37 | | B4 | 1.06 | | C3 | 1.06 |
| | A4 | 1 | | B5 | 1.16 | | C4 | 1.17 |
| 1A | A5 | 1.35 | 1B | B6 | 1 | 1C | C5 | 1.04 |
| | Av. | 1.14 | | | 1.12 | | | 1.09 |
| | A6 | 1.07 | | B7 | 1.24 | | C6 | 1.28 |
| | A7 | 1.16 | | B8 | 1.21 | | C7 | 1.05 |
| 2A | A8 | 1.32 | 2B | B9 | 1.19 | 2C | C8 | 1.28 |
| | A9 | 1.11 | | B10 | 1.13 | | C9 | 1.11 |
| | A10 | 1.17 | | | | | C10 | 1.19 |
| | Av. | 1.17 | | | 1.19 | | | 1.18 |
| | A11 | 1 | | B11 | 1.21 | | C11 | 1.35 |
| | A12 | 1.33 | | B12 | 1.19 | | C12 | 1.33 |
| | A14 | 1 | | B13 | 1.38 | | C13 | 1.18 |
| 3A | A16 | 1 | 3B | B14 | 1.67 | 3C | C14 | 1.21 |
| | A17 | 1.11 | | B15 | 1.14 | | C15 | 1.47 |
| | Av. | 1.09 | | | 1.32 | | | 1.31 |
| | A18 | 1.29 | | B16 | 1.18 | | C16 | 1.2 |
| | A19 | 1.15 | | B17 | 1 | | C17 | 1.11 |
| 4A | A20 | 1.22 | 4B | B18 | 1.42 | 4C | C18 | 1.26 |
| | | | | B19 | 1.18 | | C19 | 1.78 |
| | | | | B20 | 1.11 | | C20 | 1.2 |
| | Av. | 1.22 | | | 1.18 | | | 1.31 |

T-Unit/Sentence Comparison to Hunt-Groups and Individuals

| | Below Grade 4 | Grade 4-8 | Grade 8-12 | Less than 1.17 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Groups | | | 1A, 2A, 4A, 2B, 3B, 4B, 1C, 3C, 4C 75% | 3A, 1B, 1C 25% |
| Teacher A | | A3 5.5% | A5, A8, A10, A12, A18, A20 33.3% | A1, A4, A11, A2, A6, A14, A7, A9, A16, A17, A19 61% |
| Teacher B | B14 5.3% | B3, B13, B18 15.8% | B5, B7, B8, B9, B11, B12, B16, B19 42% | B2, B4, B6, B10, B15, B17, B20 36.7% |
| Teacher C | C19 5% | C15 5% | C4, C6, C8, C10, C11, C12, C13, C14, C16, C18, C20 55% | C1, C2, C3, C5, C7, C9, C17 35% |
| Total | 3.5% | 8.7% | 43.9% | 43.9% |

In the Hunt study, a ratio of T-units per sentence was shown to indicate how often main clauses were coordinated. The figures given were as follows: grade 4-1.6, grade 8-1.37, grade 12-1.17, and Superior Adults-1.23. This ratio shows a decrease from grade 4 to grade 12 with just a slight increase for Superior Adults. A comparison with Hunt's three grade categories is made in this study.

An examination of group ratios of Teacher A's sample reveals no linear differation among the group T-unit/sentence ratio. An examination of the ratios of individual papers shows eleven below Hunt's findings for grade 12 (A1-1, A2-1, A4-1, A6-1.07, A7-1.16, A9-1.11, A11-1, A14-1, A16-1, A17-1.11, A19-1.15). Six ratios are in the range of grade 8 to grade 12 (A10-1.17, A5-1.35, A8-1.32, A18-1.29, A12-1.33, A20-1.22). One ratio is in the range between grade 4 and grade 8 (A3-1.37). No ratio was higher than the one which Hunt gives for his grade 4 srudents.

An examination of the group ratios of Teacher B's sample shows no linear differation although Group 1B has the lowest ratio. Individual ratios reveal eight with a ratio less than 1.17 (B2-1, B4-1.06, B5-1.16, B6-1, B10-1.13, B15-1.14, B17-1, B20-1.11). Seven papers have a ratio in the range given for grade 8 and grade 12 (B7-1.24, B8-1,21, B9-1.19, B11-1.21, B12-1.19, B16-1.18, B19-1.18). Three ratios are between those given for grade 4 to grade 8 (B3-1.4, B13-1.38, B18-1.42). One paper has a ratio above that given for

grade 4 (B14-1.67).

An examination of the group ratios of Teacher C's sample reveals a linear differation from Group 1C to Group 2C to Group 3C. A statistical analysis of the means of these ratios reveals no significant difference, however. Individual papers reveal that seven papers have a ratio less than 1.17 (C1-1.11, C2-1.12, C3-1.06, C5-1.04, C7-1.05, C9-1.11, C18-1.11). Elevne papers have a ratio between grade 8 and grade 12 (C4-1.17, C6-1.28, C10-1.19, C11-1.35, C12-1.33, C13-1.18, C14-1.21, C17-1.2, C19-1.26, C21-1.2). One paper has a ratio in the range for grade 4 to grade 8 (C16-1.47), and one is above 1.6 (C20-1.78).

The ratio of T-units to sentences provides a single measure of the writer's tendency to join T-units together into sentences. Hunt's figures suggest that grade 12 students choose to do this less frequently than grade 4 students. (His figure for Superior Adults is somewhat higher than the one given for grade 12.).

The mean ratio of the quality groups reveals that all groups were below the figure given by Hunt for grade 8. In the sample of Teacher A only one paper (5.5%) was higher than the ratio given for grade 8. In the sample of Teacher B, four papers (21%) were higher, and in the sample of Teacher C, two papers (10%) were above. If the ratios of individual papers are

considered, approximately 12 percent are above the ratio given for grade 8. In other words, most of the papers written for the examination which were used in this study, revealed a T-unit/sentence ratio which is comparable to the one that Hunt gives between grade 8 and grade 12. In fact, 44 percent had a ratio less than the one given for grade 12. Although there does not seem to be a direct correlation between the quality grade and the ratio, it is interesting to note that the groups of papers which are rated as the best papers have the lowest T-unit/sentence ratio. Only one other group (3A) has that distinction.

Although the ratio of T-unit/sentence does not seem to be a predictor or indicator of the quality of a paper, it may be safe to say that one can expect this ratio to be smaller in better papers than in poorer ones.

Summary of Findings.

T-unit

1. In the sample of Teacher B, there is a linear differentiation of the mean T-unit length in the quality grouping. The highest quality group has the longest mean T-unit length.

2. The mean T-unit length of the top three quality groups(and 4A) is in the range of the one given by Hunt for grade 12.

3. The individual papers with the longest T-unit length and the one closest to the one given by Hunt for his Superior Adults are all in the groups of papers which received the highest grades.

4. Nearly one third of the papers contain T-unit lengths which are less than the one reported by Hunt for grade 8, but only twenty-three percent of the sample received the lowest quality grade.

Clause length

1. The mean clause lengths of the top quality groups are longer than any other groups. This difference is significant for the Teacher B and Teacher C sample.

2. The individual papers with the longest clause length tend to be in the top quality groups. This is true of only one other paper which is not in this grouping.

3. Fifty-three percent of the papers in this sample have a clause length less than the one reported by Hunt for grade 8.

Clauses/T-unit

1. There does not seem to be a direct correlation between the quality grade given a paper (individually or grouped) and the ratio of clauses to T-unit.

2. The data indicate that the majority of the papers had a clause to T-unit ratio which was above the one Hunt gave for grade 8 students.

T-units/Sentences

1. Although there does not seem to be a direct correlation between the quality grade and the ratio of T-unit to sentence, the groups of papers which are rated as the best papers have the lowest ratio.

Just as O'Donnell has stated in his review of Loban's work, " no single measurement used in any studies completed to date is sufficiently valid and reliable to provide a thoroughly dependable indication of where an individual child is at a given point in time on the path towards linguistic maturity," so too, no statement can be made at this point to suggest that evidence of certain indexes of syntactical development in a paper guarantees top quality of writing or the lack of it. In fact Nold and Freedman state, " words per T-unit and other standard developmental measures are not useful as predicting perception of quality." In fact they support Francis Christensen's claim that free final modification may be a superior indicator of mature writing.

This study does not give definitive proof that the various indexes of maturity examined in the papers could be predictors of quality or are in fact indicators of quality as judged by the raters of the examination papers. The data, to my mind, does suggest that more investigation has to be done. One can not completely ignore the relationships in the sample of Teacher B's papers, the fact that three papers with the longest T-unit length and closest to Hunt's Superior Adults were in the top quality groups, or the relationships which exist in clause length and the top quality groups of the sample.

There does seem to be enough evidence in a number of studies to justify the claim that older students write

longer T-units, longer clauses. Instruction to help this development seems feasible; however, this attention to the sentence whether one supports the view of Hunt or Christensen has to be tempered.

The quality of a piece of writing does not for the most part depend on one sentence or even a series of sentences taken one at a time. Rather it is the whole piece of writing which determines quality. Syntax is only a small portion of language use in a written composition.

The cumulative effect of words, sentences, paragraphs to accomplish a purpose and how this effect is perceived by the audience(reader) determines quality. It is not "To be, or not to be: that is the question" which makes this soliloquy a masterful piece of writing, not the clause length, and not the T-unit length, or not even the free floating modifiers; but rather it is the total context--the purpose, the effect on reader, and how words and sentences have been used to achieve this purpose and effect. Likewise this should be one of the main considerations in the evaluation of a piece of writing and should be one of the principles which underlies instruction as well.

Suggestions for Further Study.

1. Replicate the present study using a larger sample and maintaining rater reliability.

2. Ascertain the factors which differentiate the quality of papers in order to develop applicable criteria by which to judge quality.

3. Devise an experiment to compare the "quality" of written work of students who have had instruction to help T-unit and clause length development with those who have not.

4. Determine what other factors differentiate students' written work at various grade levels with quality as a variable.

5. Develop a series of case studies similar to Emig's, the focus of which should be the evaluating process of the composition teacher.

There is a focus at the present time on written composition and to a degree on its evaluation. Charles Cooper in Evaluating Writing has discussed in detail the problems in the evaluation process, and the constraints in the evaluation process of Regents papers have been alluded to earlier in this study. How to move the theoretical and philisophical constructs which relate to evaluation into the majority of English classrooms is a problem yet to be solved.

In all probability, classroom teachers will not resort to a syntactical analyzation of student papers. Most are already bogged down with more work than they can handle, and studies which pursue such analyzation do so in order to develop strategies for instruction rather than evaluation.

Most classroom teachers will not find themselves involved with researchers to be trained as raters. Most will not cooperate further to obtain multiple independent ratings of at least two pieces of a student's writing which is a time-consuming practice, and it is unlikely that teachers responsible for rating Regents papers will be able to use in the foreseeable future a holistic means of rating as suggested by Cooper to overcome these problems.

What constitutes "good" writing is an evaluative determination which has instructional implications. It is often a subjective reaction which varies with each reader. It focuses on the product rather than

the process.

The examination papers used in this study have had an evaluative determination placed on them. It may be of interest to determine if there are any discernible features of the papers which show why such a rating was given and if there are any implied guidelines for instructional purposes. The results may well be the opinion of the researcher because the teachers who rated the papers originally have had no opportunity to explicate their reactions, thoughts, procedures, and techniques.

The detailed syntactical analyzation of the papers, in terms of the Hunt study, has been given earlier in the study and relatively little relationship seems to exist between the inherent syntax and the quality grade. The assumption was made that teachers followed the "Suggestions" pamphlet for criteria in rating the papers. It may be useful to examine the papers in this light.(Any examination of this sort will be subjective even though both teacher and researcher are familiar with the suggested criteria.) Four papers from three quality groupings from the Teacher A sample are used; four papers from four quality groupings of the Teacher B sample. Each paper is reproduced and followed by a discussion.

#1



## What Have We Done To Our Heroes

The present-day hero differs dramatically from that of the past. Whereas society used to enshrine as its heroes those people who reflect its fantasies--the Swashbucklers, the great lovers, or the beautiful seductresses, now, it would seem, society chooses, as its hero, the underdog--the average man or woman who, against all odds, "defeats" the richer or more powerful.

Errol Flynn was a great hero in past years. Struggling to escape the dreariness of their existence, millions of people lived vicariously through him. His captivating adventures with the Barbary pirates and his numerous acts of gallantry proved to be a perfect outlet for the ennui inherent to the lives of many American men.

Casanova, too was at one time the idol of millions. His multitudinous, far-flung romances with the most beautiful women imaginable provoked the envy of every re-blooded male. Emulated in both speech and mannerisms, Casanova, like Flynn, was a hero that represented a fantasy incarnate.

Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein are perfect examples of the modern-day hero. By uncovering and exposing the Watergate conspiracy, they ennacted the American ideal of the oppressed rebelling against and overcoming the evil power-at large.

Television detective "Columbo," too, is a modern-day hero, though of more modest proportions than Woodward and Bernstein. A seemingly dull-witted, sloppily-dressed police detective, Columbo is the personification of the average American middle-aged male. By always being triumphant over "the powers of evil," Columbo enacts the present-day American ideal previously described.

Society's heroes have, indeed, undergone a change. Instead of being paragons of virility, sex-appeal, or anything else, as they have been in the past, they now seem to follow a "David and Goliath syndrome" where the underdog rebels and overcomes his evil enemy or oppressor.

The teacher gave this composition a point value of 30. This places the paper in the category of "Excellent" which is explained as,"Approximate perfection in technique of composition, with evident power, exceptional smoothness or vividness, etc. Exceptional development of topic."

The student who wrote this composition has focused on the topic throughout the work and can not be faulted, it seems to me, on technique or content.

Paragraph one focuses immediately on the topic and begins an organization pattern which is apparent throughout the paper. The idea of comparison and contrast is strong in paragraph one, sustained in the remainder of the work, and re-emphasized in the last paragraph. In addition, the student gives specific examples and supporting details to develop the topic.

Mature content places this in the exceptional category. The student uses some rather sophisticated language conventions and a rich vocabulary. Several hyphonated adjectives are used, present-day, dull-willed, sloppily-dressed. The vocabulary is sophisticated and demands the attention of the reader. Seductresses, inherent, ennui, multitudinous are only a few examples of this student's way with words.

It's only hair

Hair has become a very important feature in today's modern society. Its color, texture, style and total look add to the person who wears it. There are many ways in which people express themselves by their hair.

First we have the honest approach. As a young girl honesty and purity is very important. That is why at the ages of six through ten it is important to wear your hair in braids. Of course, this only pertains to a girl. The long braids with the colorful ribbons give every young girl the cute and innocent look.

As time progresses on, an innocent look is no longer the desired affect. As a young pre-teen you are going through many changes. One of the most important thing is your appearance, because you are now attracted to the opposite sex. Of course this is the age of uncertainty, and no matter what kind of hair you have, you'll do anything to look like the prettiest girl in the grade. If she has thick hair and you have thin hair a disaster occurs. You'll do anything to make it thicker, such as wave it, curl it, fluff it, puff it and even yell at it. But every girl gets through this stage in one piece.

But once you've reached maturity things start coming together and you begin to work with what nature gave you. Today there is no set fashion because everything is accepted. If wavy is what you have, great! As long as hair is healthy, the wavy, straight, curly, long and short are all vogue. What's most important is that it is you and you are happy with it. And depending on what mood you are in, express it through your hair. If you are going through an undecided period, put little braids in your hair and first let it go in any direction. If it is a sophisticated occasion get a set at the local beauty salon.

Yes, it may only be hair, but hair tells more about a person than you think. Since expression seems to be so important today, let your hair do some of the expressing.

This paper received a rating of 26 which places it in the "Good" category. This is explained as, " Approximate perfection in technique of composition. Good development of topic; good work, but not really distinctive in any way. or Good technique of composition and exceptional development of topic."

The focus on the topic is sustained and an attempt is made to develop a point of view from a chronological order consideration. There is a general organizational plan; there is unity; there is an introduction and conclusion.

There are some minor problems with redundancy and punctuation, particularly introductory clauses; but there are no major problems, it seems to me, with technique. The writer is not consistent in person and shifts it in paragraph three. The organization or content seems as exceptional as the composition first discussed. The vocabulary is not powerful or unusual. The paper seems fairly rated.

#3



## Freedom is a Car

To have a car means to be able to go out whenever I would want to and to go wherever I would want to. This to me means freedom.

One of the best things about a car is that I could go any length of distance and it would take me there fast. I could drive across the United States, if I wanted to, and I would be free to go wherever I wanted to.

Another advantage to having a car is that I could go out at any time and I wouldn't have to depend on my parents, brothers, or friends to tell me when I have to go since I would be using the car. Then once I was out it would also be my decision when I would want to leave that place.

Having a car would mean that I would have control over where I'd go and the time spent out. I would consider that freedom since it would be my choice what to do.

Freedom to do things and control over decisions is something great to have. It's a good feeling since all through my life I have been told when to do things and I've been bossed around. Having a car would be my first feeling of freedom since I would be the boss. The freedom I'd feel from having a car would come from being able to go wherever I wanted to and being able to go or leave some place whenever I wanted to.

The teacher rated this paper with a 23 which places it in the "Fair" category which is explained as, "Good technique of composition and average development of topic or Weak technique of composition and exceptional development of topic."

The opening paragraph announces the topic, equating car and freedom. Freedom is further delineated by equating it with freedom of movement. There is an attempt to elaborate on time and place with examples. Paragraph four seems to be a restatement of paragraph one and the paragraph simply says again what has already been said. The organization seems weak, and what might be construed as examples are, to my mind, repetitions.

There are some obvious problems with language conventions. Paragraph two has either a mispunctuated compound sentence or a sentence with no capitalization. There are punctuation problems in paragraph three and paragraph five. There is nothing exceptional about word choice or vocabulary. Infact, the vocabulary may be considered rather weak. The good technique suggested for this grade category is questionable, and if one compares the composition to the model given in "Suggestions" for this quality grade, this one is inferior. With a committee rating of this paper, it is conceivable that the grade would be lowered.

#4



Movies Hollywood never should have made

Hollywood has made many movies in its history of the "movie capital of the world." Some movies turned out great by wining oscars and bieng liked by the general audience. Others were so bad that they are unknown to many people. These bad movies Hollywood should have never made or even touched.

On catagory would be Exorcism. The movie "The Exorcist" was a big hit and is the third largest grosing movie ever made. After the "Exorcist" became famous many movies were made of Excorism, most of them trash. For example "The Omen" was supposed to be like the "Exorcist". Then how come all 3 times that I saw the movies the whole theatre was breaking up with laughter.

Another catagory for this would be the shark movies. "Jaws" (which was the largest grosing movie ever made) was a great hit. Ever since then many other movies were made like it such as; "The mouth", "Baby Jaws"... and much much more like these.

There are many more movies like or as bad as the ones mentioned. The list of them is so big that you could write a book about them. For every hit Hollywood makes there will be about ten trashy low grade sequals made. Too bad the public cant do anything about the sequals

The final example taken from Teacher A's sample for this discussion is taken from the same category as the paper just discussed which means that it was judged as "fair."

The topic is given in the first paragraph and there seems to be an opportunity to compare and contrast, but the writer selects one category and attempts to explain it through examples. The middle two paragraphs are devoted to giving and explaining examples to support the idea that there are movies which Hollywood should not have made. There is an attempt to organize and to maintain unity.

There are some problems with language conventions. There are spelling problems in paragraph one, two, three, and four. Diction is unsophisticated; thought lacks maturity. The paper is inferior to the model given for this grade quality.

To see how an experienced teacher would rank the papers on a scale of best to poorest, I removed the point values which had been given. I asked such a person to rank the papers, giving no other directions. This person did realize that the examples were from a Regents examination and is familiar with the way in which such papers are marked.

This person switched the order of the last two papers under discussion. Although we did not discuss the point value given by the original rater, there obviously would have been a disagreement with the value assigned to these papers. I, too, believe that the

paper, "Freedom is a car," is over rated.

Teacher A seems to have attempted to conform to the given criteria, and a case can be made for that if need be. When papers are in the lower quality categories other factors may influence the grading of the paper. In fact this may be true in every category. The teacher probably knows the student. There may be a consideration of the year's work not just the examination. A fine point value differentiation may be too stringent a discrimination for the teacher to make( this may account for what appears to be a lack of reliability in the rating), or the teacher may not fully understand or may even forget that each point given(30 total) represents three and a third in adjusting to a percentage point value. It is conceivable that the value of the composition is adjusted to accommodate a need for a total grade on the examination.

Obviously Teacher A recognizes the excellent and good papers and rewards them accordingly. The awarding of thirty points to the first paper discussed indicates this. The discrimination between the excellent and good is not difficult to see either nor is the differentiation between the two top categories and the fair category. It is difficult to determine the actual rationale for the point assignment on the two papers in this category, however.

Ideally, written work serves as a means to improve instruction--hopefully on an individual basis. As constituted, examinations such as the one from

which these samples were taken do not usually serve this purpose. The student who wrote about hair could do a better job with constructive suggestions and an opportuntiy to rewrite. In all probability, the same could be said about the last compositions as well. Since teachers and students are denied the opportunity to use such a piece of writing as a means to improve instruction and learning, the only recourse left is for the teacher to generalize from the papers what the strengths and weaknesses are and plan an instructional agenda to overcome such weaknesses. The fallacy here is that what one group of students needs all groups of students need. This may or may not be the case. In addition, if a teacher focuses instruction in writing on the type of writing required for such an examination, the students may well be disserviced.

It was midmorning when I awoke from a deep nights sleep or so I thought. The warm sun was sifting through the curtains as I dressed. It seemed as if it would be a pleasant day for I had no school. As I was putting on my shoes and redying myself for another day the sensation of fear filled my body. I shivered from its effect on me. I had no reason to be afraid but I was.

As I went outside a cold brish wind bit my face as my fear faded. I looked around only to see that the street was deserted along with all the houses. I felt uneasy as I looked around only to see a skateboard near the road. Suddenly I was gripped with anxiety to ride it down the hill at the end of our road. I practiced with the scateboard for the rest of the morning as my confidence grew I soon learned all the distinct characteristics of the skateboard. Finally I built up enough confidence and decided to make a successful run of the hill at the end of the road.

As I stood at the top of the hill my obsession to master the hill increased with each passing moment. For a short time I grew hesitant for I realized the possible implications a fall might have at this time. As I started to go down the hill on my suicidal attempt fear and terror siezed control over me. I gained speed but I was going for all my attention was focused on the road ahead.

After a minute or so into my extravagant ride, I noticed that there was no way for me to stop myself. Just then a stone got lodged in the wheels as I went through the air by an awkward force. I seemed to be rising higher in the air but I was not for I hit the ground with a tremendous force that shreaded my body into elaborate hunks of flesh.

At that moment, I awoke in a cold sweat. All this time I have been having a nightmare. Now fully awake seeing that I was unharmed a noticed that It was midmorning. As I dressed the warm sun sifted through my curtains. I went to my window only to be filled with terror for outside there was only a scateboard by the edge of the road.

The first paper in the sample from Teacher B is on nightmares althoughit does not have a title. The teacher gave the paper a 27, placing it in the top quality grouping.

The composition is developed through a time sequence, and the author tells what happened first, second, etc. The chronology is maintained. Unity is evident throughout as is coherence. The transition from paragraph to paragraph is good. The story line engages. What may place this in the top grouping is the twist at the end where the reader finds himself confronted with a cyclical piece.

However, there are an undue number of mechanical errors in the composition, particularly the use of the comma. There is at least one such error in each paragraph. In addition, there are several spelling errors. There is also a verb tense error in the last paragraph. Notice that the student spelled skateboard correctly the first time that the word was used and incorrectly the next two times.

The dictates of the "Suggestions" pamphlet, "Give an honor mark, 90-100 percent, only to an answer showing exceptional development of topic, approximate perfection in technique of composition and some other good quality...," might eliminate this paper from such a mark because of technique.

Freedom is a car

When a teenager hits that golden age of sixteen, the thought of car driving perverts the mind.

Let me give you some examples. When a teenager gets his license, he or she jumps right into daddy's car, and tears out of the driveway. You see, everybody else drives, and it is of the utmost importance to do the same.

How many worries does a young driver have? Probably none. Daddy supplies the car, gas, and insurance. Daddy's boy or girl just contribute to the early destruction and "hell-raising" with the supplied luxury package. No wonder more adults today drink more and become pre-maturely gray.

Now since a car is available, it becomes a cooler on wheels. You fill the trunk up with "milsons", get all the girls and boys together and drive to the park.

Why are parents getting su-h mistreatment and not saying anything? They just say that their little boy or girl is just going through a phase and they will snap out of it.

The teenager really is emancipated when mommy and daddy by their little baby his own little toy, that's right, his own personal car. From that moment, a great investment is put in to buy "mags", slicks", "headers", just little pieces to make the car look better.

"Freedom is a car" received a 25 from Teacher B. (Categories are explained more fully earlier in the paper and in the preceding discussion of Teacher A's papers.)

This composition does not focus on a central idea although one is implied. It may not be, however, the same one as suggested by the title. There is a lack of unity, coherence, and direction. Although there are no egregious errors in spelling and punctuation, there does not seem to be anything to approximate the criteria for technique and topic development for this quality grouping. The tone of the paper may be its outstanding feature. It is light, humorous and sustained throughout. The paper can be differentiated from the top paper in this sample although it may be over rated.

I often have nighmeres. usually about being shot, robbed or jumped. But one nighmere that stands out above all others is that of when I feel out of a boat.

The setting was a dark, dreary day and I was sitting on my porch at my cottage. My friend, Joanathan, shouted to me telling me to come over to his cottage.

I started down to my boathouse because I had decided to go by boat. My boat was in fine shape, but the engine was in great need of a tune up. The ony way the engine would start is if it were in forward gear with the accelerator twisted to "fast".

After reaching the boathouse, I adjusted the engine so that it would start. I then pushed the boat out of the boat house and into open water.

I pulled the cord two or three times then I felt a tug from the boat. I felt a weird sense of uneasyness in the boat. I then realized I had lost control of the boat. I was then thrown from the boat into the cold May waters of the St. Lawrence River.

I plunged down deep, maybe ten feet, and I then realized that the boat was making circles around me and that noone else was in the boat to stop it from hitting me.

My head came above water and I saw the boat come dashing at me. I lunged for the side of the boat but missed and was nearly run over. After the boat circled again I made another dart at the side, timing my approach earlier this time. I grasped the side and hung on for my life. I housted myself into a position so that I could pull out the choke to the engine, which would cause the engine to stall.

I managed to seat myself in the boat with my legs dangling in the water. I then pulled the choke and breathed a sigh of relief as the engine sputtered to a stop.

When I think back on this unfortunate happening I alwasy become nerves. But, this happening did come to serve a good perpose. I will never fool around near the water and always be sure my equipment is in proper running order.

This paper is untitled but the topic is obvious. The teacher gave this paper a 23. There is an organizational pattern to this composition. There are many specific and vivid details to support the topic. Coherence and untiy are evident. Transition is maintained by keeping the events in chronological order.

A number of errors in spelling and mechanics detract from the composition, however. One such error is the spelling of "nightmares" although the word itself was given in the examination paper. Several other spelling errors can be found as well(purpose, nervous, hoisted). Some of the sentences in the composition are awkward in construction. This paper does not seem to me to be as good as the first paper but may easily be equal, if not better, to the paper which received a 25.

A Person Whose Life I Envy

Is there a person whose life you envy? I feel that everyone has an idol or a person whose life they envy. The person whose life they envy. The person whose life I envy is Fred Lynn. Fred Lynn plays center field for the Boston Red Sox and is one of todays superstars. I envy this man for I too play baseball and would like to be a superstar of the future.

The reason that I envy this man is because everything is going wright for him. One thing that is most important to one is that he plays professional baseball, which someday I too would like to do. My second reason is that he has a lovely wife and is starting a family.
Thirdly I feel that his parents and piers are very proud of him. Finally what is probably of the utmost importance to me is that he is making good money.

I am sure that a lot of people envy Fred Lynn for other reasons such as being a celebrity. I am sure people like and envy Fred Lynn because of the glory and attention which he recieves all over the country. I would like to be interviewed by many reporters or have my picture on the cover of Sports Illustrated.

I feel that every young person should envy someone. I feel this is true because it sets goals for younger people to try to achieve. For when a youth of today has goals to shoot at I feel that he does more and better things in life. And this is why I envy a man like Fred Lynn who sets goals for me to achieve.

This paper received a 19 from the teacher which is the lowest grade of any of the papers examined in this discussion. There is an organizational pattern in the paper. There is a statement with supporting reasons given. The reasons seem shallow, but they are evident. The concluding paragraph maintains coherence and unity with the beginning of the composition. The topic lacks depth of illustration . There are only a few errors in mechanics, spelling, etc., enough to move it from consideration for the top groupings. The paper, using the criteria from"Suggestions," may be underrated.

The teacher who ranked the papers from best to poorest put this paper last but admitted that this reaction was purely subjective because it seemed evident that the student had obviously written for the teacher-examiner. In ranking the other papers, "nighmares" was placed in first place rather than in the third position it occupied because of Teacher B's rating. Then came the composition on "Nightmares-Skateboard" and "Freedom is a car."

Teacher B does not seem to have followed as consistently the criteria and may have overrated the papers to a degree. The two top papers seem weaker than the top papers of Teacher A. In addition students' papers in this sample seem weaker in mechanics, word power, and organization.

Reliability of grading is not guaranteed through

the given criteria. Consistency of quality is not either. A 90-100, for example, obviously does not mean the same thing to the two teachers whose papers were examined. Uniformity or consistency do not seem supported by the given criteria; and it becomes obvious that if reliability of rating is desired, something has to be done relative to the evaluation of these papers.(The same may be true for any other set of examination papers which relies on a written essay.)

It has been stated that such examinations have a strong influence on curriculum in a school(my own observations would confirm this fact); therefore, it is logical to suspect classroom instruction may in part be guided by the demands of the examination. A dilemma exists! An examination, such as this one, has many of the faults described earlier; however, can teachers follow a composition program which emphasizes purpose, effects on audienc, or the "process of composition" and still guarantee that students will do well when confron ed with such examinations. Unless it can be shown that the answer is a definite "yes", or the examinations change to reflect a "new approach" to composition; the dilemma remains.

How then could a teacher translate the results into an instructional agenda?

The papers themselves could be used as models. Too often the models given to students to follow are

taken from recognized authors who are world famous. Students should have familiarity with such works, but it may be difficult for a sixteen or seventeen year old student to emulate Hemmingway or Faulkner.

It may be more advantageous to use the composition models of students. If one wants to teach organizational patterns, many such lessons could evolve from the eight papers under discussion here. Strengths and weaknesses are apparent or could become so through the use of a duplicator, overhead projector, and discussion.

Maturity of thought, transition, word choice, avoidance of redundancy, unity, coherence, sentence structure, sentence combining, and mechanics can all be taught through such papers. Students could rewrite to improve the original, something one does not usually do with Nobel prize winners.

Much could be done to improve instruction through papers written for examination purposes; most times it is not.

Footnotes.

1. Kellog Hunt, Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels. p.5.

2. Charles Cooper and Lee Odell, Evaluating Writing. p. 101.

3. Cooper, p.130.

4. Suggestions on the Rating of Regents Examination Papers. p.1.

5. William Coffman, "On the Reliability of Ratings of Essay Examinations in English." p.26.

6. Cooper, p.19.

7. Sara Sanders and John Littlefield, "Perhaps Test Essays Can Reflect Significant Improvement in Freshman Composition: Report on a Successful Attempt." p. 147.

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Suggestions on the Rating of Regents Examination Papers in English.Albany, New York: The State Education Department. (not dated).

APPENDIX 1-- The Rating Pamphlet

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12224

# SUGGESTIONS ON THE RATING OF REGENTS EXAMINATION PAPERS IN ENGLISH

## General

**No paper seriously deficient in English composition — that is, containing several serious errors in composition, such as faulty sentence structure or gross illiteracy in grammatical expression or many minor errors — will be accepted by the Department, even though the pupil may have attained a passing mark in subject matter. The paper is a final measure of the pupil's ability to think clearly and express himself correctly.**

A paper containing a considerable number of misspelled words will not be rejected on spelling alone, but such a paper should be of at least 75 percent quality in other respects if it is to be accepted in spite of the deficiency in spelling. Any paper, therefore, showing more than 10 misspelled words should be carefully scrutinized.

*Follow strictly the "Instructions for Rating" key, allowing credit for only those answers that appear in the key.* Give no credit for an answer that is obviously a substitution for the required answer.

## Scoring

To insure uniformity in scoring, please follow these instructions.

Use a cumulative system of marking, adding the mark assigned each answer to the preceding total. Those schools which score papers by the *committee* method, however, should continue to do so.

Use only *red* ink or pencil in rating Regents papers. Do not *correct* the pupil's work by making insertions or changes of any kind.

Do not place any marks within the body of an essay-type answer or composition. At the end of *each part* of an essay-type answer to a literature question, place the credit allowed to that part.

Place the exact total score earned in the space provided on the outside of the answer paper. [Exception: ½ raises mark to next point.]

Check carefully for mechanical errors (addition, etc.).

Write your signature clearly on each paper marked.

DET 530
17871

## Rating of Discussion-Type Answers

In every paper the pupil should show his ability *to think, to use the English language as a medium of expression and to recognize and organize essential points of content.* In all discussion-type answers, therefore, *accuracy* and *clearness of expression* are of prime importance.

### *Composition*

*Judge composition answers as a whole on (1) technique of composition, but require (2) competent development of the topic.* A correctly written answer showing weak or meager development of the topic should receive about the minimum allowance for a passing answer. An answer showing poor technique of composition or incoherent development of the topic should be rated below the passing grade. No specific deduction should be made for any special type of error in composition. Do not, for instance, deduct a specified amount for each misspelled word or each error in capitalization etc., unless special directions to that effect are included in the question itself. Judge the answer as a whole on a percentage basis.

Give an honor mark, 90–100 percent, only to an answer showing exceptional development of the topic, approximate perfection in technique of composition and some other good quality, such as individuality and evident power, vividness, discriminating vocabulary etc. An honor mark should *not* be given for commonplace work simply because the answer contains no glaring errors.

Note the following scale:

Excellent = 90–100 percent — Approximate perfection in technique of composition, with evident power, exceptional smoothness or vividness etc.
Exceptional development of topic.

Good = 80–90 percent — Approximate perfection in technique of composition. Good development of topic; good work, but not really distinctive in any way.

*or*

Good technique of composition and exceptional development of topic.

Fair = 70–80 percent — Good technique of composition and average development of topic.

*or*

Weak technique of composition and exceptional development of topic.

Passing = 65–70 percent — Weak technique of composition and good development of topic.

*or*

Approximate perfection in technique of composition and weak or meager development of topic.

Rejected = below passing — Poor technique of composition *or* incoherent development of topic.

In judging technique of composition, consider competence in the following areas as essential and incompetence as *serious:*

Thought coherence, i. e., general plan
Sentence structure, i. e., clearly "run-on" sentences or those sentence fragments which indicate incompetence in expression
Grammatical correctness
Punctuation and capitalization
Paragraphing
Unity
Spelling — basic and ordinary words

Consider competence in the following areas, in addition to those above, as desirable. If incompetence in one of the following areas affects the clarity or coherence of the composition, however, the error should be considered *serious,* like errors in the above areas.

Introduction and conclusion
Use of idioms
Emphasis
Word order
Vocabulary
Word coherence, i. e., connection or transition
Modes and tenses
Spelling — unusual words

Judge answers as a whole on a percentage basis according to the scale on the previous page. For example, if 30 credits are assigned to a composition, allow from 27 to 30 credits for a 90–100 percent

composition, 24 to 26 credits for an 80–90 percent composition, 21 to 23 credits for a 70–80 percent composition etc.

Make some deduction for a composition decidedly below the minimum number of words required. If 250 words are required in a composition worth 30 credits, but the answer contains only 200 words, rate the answer on the basis of 24 credits as the maximum; if the answer contains only 150 words, rate the answer on the basis of 18 credits etc. No deduction should be made for length beyond the number of words required, unless it is excessive. *Length*, however, should not be considered as a substitute for *strength*.

If the pupil's composition shows an unusual and commendable appreciation of situation, circumstances and character, evidenced by originality of delineation and style or possibly by touches of genuine wit or humor, or if the production shows exceptional literary attainment, take such points into consideration in rating the composition.

### Examples of Composition and Literature Rating

To assist teachers in evaluating composition and literature answers, the Department offers the following examples of rating. Below each answer is given the total credit that the pupil would receive on the basis of 30 credits for the composition question and 10 credits for each part of a 20-credit literature question. In the comment following each of the answers, the criterions for rating are the same as those in the previous instructions. Note that the examples given are *illustrative only* of the various levels of pupil achievement in writing a composition or literature answer. It is not impossible that a superior student gain 30 credits for a perfect composition; however, it is only rarely that such compositions are written. The superior literature answers given for examples are long; they reflect a mature response to the selections discussed, together with power of expression.

In rating a composition answer in either English three years or English four years, judge the answer as a whole, as indicated, but expect a more mature development of the topic in the English four years examination.

I

## Gadgets

Gadgets! What a clever, yet all-inclusive word this one is. When we hear it we are reminded of devices which affect almost every phase of modern living and which range from the lowly jackknife to the highly sensitive electric eye. It is only after careful reflection that we realize how much actual influence these devices have on our daily lives.

First we should appreciate the wide diversification of interests which gadgets serve. During the course of the day we encounter gadgets at every turn. In the kitchen we find new-type can openers, apple corers, and cabbage choppers. The refrigerator has not escaped the inventive urge of our gadget scientists; lights to illuminate its interior, and plastic ice cube holders make the housewife's tasks easier. Our cars are distinguished by automatic direction indicators, window wipers, suction-type coat hangers. Truly we have come to regard gadgets almost as a part of up-to-date living.

It is this " up-to-date-ness " that is another form of the " Keep Up With The Joneses " spirit of many Americans. The public's devotion to many fads and whims is now supplemented by the provocative appeal of gadgets of every description. It is sometimes their practical appeal which captivates the car buyer who admires the many devices which make driving easier; more often it is his desire to proudly display the latest in gadgets. Here is the complacency of a Babbitt at its worst.

Is it not true too that gadgets result in our dependence upon them? We feel lost without them, and that something is missing from the completeness of our day. Who has not felt a sense of inadequacy when he finds that one of his favorite gadgets is not functioning properly?

I realize my point of view is not a usual one, but let the reader ask himself as I have: Are gadgets really as insignificant as we think? I wonder.

Rating: 27, Eng. IV; 28, Eng. III
Comment: Approximate perfection in technique of composition

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General plan clear and logical; good transitions shown
Firm grasp of sentences, grammatical correctness and punctuation
Paragraphs well-developed and unified
Correct spelling of difficult words
Introduction and conclusion effective
Superior vocabulary
Exceptional development of the topic
Climactic arrangement of ideas well done
Thought mature

II

## Gadgets

Every day one reads of some new gadget to benefit mankind. Although he hasn't hit the headlines yet, my friend, Jefferson Jefferson III, has come up with some gadgets that would astonish Rube Goldberg. His two earliest accomplishments haven't been successful; but some day I'll be proud to say, "I knew him when.."

Jefferson's parents first discovered that they had reared an inventive genius when he built his automatic hair comber. It consisted of a large comb attached to a small motor suspended from the top of a door-frame. When Jeff walked out of his room, he broke an electric eye beam which started the gadget, which in turn combed his hair as he passed the door-frame. It worked very well until one day Jefferson's father, as bald as an Easter egg, happened to break the electric beam. Presto! Before you could say Jackie Robinson, that infernal machine had worn twenty-four ruts into the shining dome of Jefferson Jefferson II. Needless to say, my inventive friend was soundly thrashed for that day's work.

In spite of this episode, Jefferson did not give up inventing. Just the other day he came up with a new gadget, a fountain pen filler. This consisted mainly of an automatic arm and a bottle of ink. After an open fountain pen had been placed in it, the arm would dip into the ink and pull the lever. When Mr. Jefferson Jefferson II unwittingly laid one of his best cigars, a Corona Corona, upon it and then later began to smoke the cigar, trouble ensued. It seems Jeff's father doesn't like ink-filled cigars.

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From these examples, you can readily see that my friend has real talent. He probably has a new gadget already, but I haven't seen him for two weeks. As a punishment for the cigar incident, his father has confined Jefferson to the house for a month. Oh, well! Such is the price of genius.

Rating: 28, Eng. IV; 29, Eng. III

Comment: Approximate perfection in technique of composition
General plan very clear
Sentence variety excellent
Excellent paragraphs
Introduction and conclusion effective
Genuine humor well sustained throughout
Exceptional development of topic
Individuality well shown
Narrative well organized and sustained

III

Gadgets

Many years ago some one sugge ed that the United States Patent Office close down because everything to invent had already been invented. This almost seemed to be true at the time; yet since the beginning of World War II we have seen an astonishing increase in some inventing fields, particularly gadgets.

Take as an example the lowly can opener. When it first "came out" it was probably a rude piece of iron or steel fashioned to perform its job quickly, if not too safely. Today we have many types which are both safe and very easy to use. The most popular design today is that of the wall type, but this too will soon be improved upon. First it was made so that it could swing out of the way; now it has a new magnet which catches the cover of the can so that the cover will not slide back into the top of the can.

Some can openers have other highly ingenious features also. They have built into them bottle openers, corkscrews, cutters, rulers, and yes, even a fish scaler. To this list of newer gadgets we must add corn holders, which are little gadgets to hold corn which may be too hot to the fingers when you are eating it. We also have strawberry

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mashers to mash strawberries and cherry pitters to take the pits out of cherries.

Who knows to what length, then, we will be led by the inventiveness of our gadget scientists? There are some who even foresee a scientific age in which gadgets will do everything for us except to get up in the morning and go to bed at night. I frankly am amazed at this possibility, that gadgets may sometime dominate our lives to that extent. We may become almost automatic ourselves. It is little wonder from what I have said above that a foreign visitor to the United States was recently heard to remark, "They ought to call this place 'Gadget Land'."

Rating: 24, Eng. IV; 25–26, Eng. III
Comment: Excellent technique of composition
General plan logical
Sentences effective, as a whole
Good grasp of grammatical correctness and punctuation
Paragraphs well developed
Good development of topic
Knowledge of subject good
Ideas well organized

## IV

### Gadgets

Every time that you enter a store you see an article that catches your attention, some little thing which you would like to try because it is unusual. Some of these gadgets are very interesting, such as the attachment for a water faucet to aeareate the water. This is accompanied with the advertisement, "It stops splashing; it allows your water to make better suds when washing dishes."

Upon entering a radio store you see all kinds of gadgets. Some of these are microphones which, they say, you can hook up to your radio and use the radio as a public address system. The new R. C. A. seven inch record player is nothing but a gadget. The time for a record change is approximately 1 and 1/5 seconds. Another gadget for use with a radio is a wireless record player, which I think is very useful because it enables you to play records over any radio in the house provided the radio is tuned to the frequency at which you are operating.

There are many more gadgets advertised over the radio, too, and on items which you buy. Looking at a box of "cereal" this

morning, I noticed that they had a ring advertised on it. This ring consisted of a small plastic baseball diamond enclosed in a plastic bubble. By pulling a small trigger on the side of the ring, you release the balls as if batted. This is a gadget in the true sense of the word because it is so large that it only serves as a source of amusement to one's friends.

Gadgets are sometimes usefull, and yet at other times they are just money-making schemes with no apparent usefulness.

Rating: 21, Eng. IV; 22–23, Eng. III
Comment: Good technique of composition
General plan fair
Sentences average
Grasp of grammatical correctness average; punctuation good
Average development of topic

V

Gadgets

People are continually making gadgets for the home, car, and for many other places. These things are made because there is a demand for such things which people can use. Everyone has a pet gadget that they would like to see built and so have I.

I would like to see a peace gadget. Some little instrument that could stop wars with the flick of the hand. Wouldn't it be nice to trade with other countrys and live right next to them without fear of their power, without sending vast amounts of money for arms and men. I think it would be grand to build men for peace and better living than to build them for war and have them killed and be killers. Something we could turn on then labor and managements were not get along together. This would keep them both happy while they could product more and make the country a better place to live in. It would make the Christian and Jews brothers and the whites and blacks pals. We could turn them out in mass production so that when you walked down the street with it on, no one would look at you or tell you to get down in the gutter, but instead say "Hi there." People could talk to one another without asking themself, what race is he, how much money does have, and what church does he go to.

It may take years to get the gadget on the market, but I think it will catch on fast and be a good seller with million of satisfied user.

Rating: 18, Eng. IV; 18, Eng. III

Comment: Poor technique of composition
Thought coherence weak
Sentences weak, run-on or incomplete
Paragraphing poor
Grammar poor
Revision poor
Incoherent development of topic
Development poor
Many omissions
Pronoun references vague